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To
Instructional Quality Commission,
Department of Education

SUB: Suggested change requested by the South Asia Faculty Group on page 215, lines 910-921(section on Buddhism and Jainism)
Dear Members of the Commission,

I have been following the Social Sciences Framework refinement process since last year and am extremely concerned with the changes in the new draft that was published on March 14th. While reading the draft, I noticed that the South Asian Faculty Group has suggested a change be made regarding the origin of Ahimsa (non-violence). The changes suggested are as mentioned below:

Suggested change (location not specified): add the following passages somewhere in this section.

Buddhism teaches that the path to liberation from the wheel of death and rebirth is through the suppression of selfish desires. It teaches that the world is impermanent, that the self is an illusion, and that suffering is rooted in the false belief in the self.

Jainism promoted the idea of ahimsa (non-violence to all life), which was taken up by Buddhists and Hindus, especially in the form of vegetarianism. The first passage could perhaps go on line 914, the second on line 920. Yes, agree with scholars language and CDE proposed placement of the language on line 914 then 920

I strongly refute this change as it is completely false. Jainism is a religion that holds its roots in Hinduism, which considered Ahimsa as one of its main tenets. The Vedas and the Upanishads, which are considered as the holy scriptures of the Hindus existed well before Jainism came into existence around 550 BCE.

The concept of Ahimsa has been mentioned in the following Hindu scriptures:

- Rigveda
- Atharvaveda
- Yajurveda
- Patanjali's Yoga Sutra
- Mahabharata
- Bhagavad Gita

I would like to share with you a few examples:

1. The term "Ahimsa" appears in the text *Taittiriya Shakha of the Yajurveda* (TS 5.2.8.7), where it refers to non-injury to the sacrificer himself.[23] It occurs several times in the *Shatapatha Brahmana* in the sense of "non-injury".[24] The Ahimsa doctrine is a late Vedic era development in Brahmanical culture.[25] The earliest reference to the idea of non-violence

to animals ("pashu-Ahimsa"), apparently in a moral sense, is in the *Kapisthala Katha Sambhita of the Yajurveda* (KapS 31.11), which may have been written in about the 8th century BCE.[26]

2. "Ahimsa Paramo DharmaH" is a Sanskrit phrase that was popularized by Mahatma Gandhi and is repeated by many leaders around the world. The phrase when translated means that non-violence is the supreme duty of mankind. This phrase is seen multiple times in the Mahabharata. In the *Mahaprasthanika Parva* of the Mahabharata you will see Ahimsa being extolled as the highest virtue in man, the highest level of self-control, the greatest gift, the best suffering, the highest strength, the finest strength, the greatest friend, the greatest happiness, the highest truth and the greatest teaching.
3. To consider that there were no vegetarians before Jainism amongst Hindus is also wrong. The Bhagavad Gita (verse 3.13 and 9.26-28) clearly describes what one should eat and what one should not depending upon the work that a person does. It also mentions humane behaviour towards animals.

These were just a few examples and there are many more, which if you would like, I can share with you at a later time. Looking at these examples I am sure that you will have no difficulty in accepting the fact that Hinduism did not take up the idea of non-violence from the Jains as mentioned by the South Asian Faculty Group. Jainism is a wonderful, but very recent religion, started by Mahavira who lived around 550 BCE. To consider that a much older religion could have taken ideas from a recent religion goes against common sense. Hence I would like you to reject the edits made by the South Asian Faculty group regarding Ahimsa on page 215, lines 910-921 (section on Buddhism and Jainism).

Please see attached pictures from the Bhagavad Gita where the word "Ahimsa" is mentioned.

Yours Sincerely,

Jyelogalawadi

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CHAPTER SIXTEEN



The Divine and Demoniac Natures

TEXTS 1-3

श्रीभगवानुवाच ।

अभयं सत्त्वसंशुद्धिर्ज्ञानयोगव्यवस्थितिः ।

दानं दमश्च यज्ञश्च स्वाध्यायस्तप आर्जवम् ॥ १ ॥

अहिंसा सत्यमक्रोधस्त्यागः शान्तिरपैशुनम् ।

दया भूतेष्वलोलुप्त्वंमार्दवं ह्रीरचापलम् ॥ २ ॥

तेजः क्षमा धृतिः शौचमद्रोहो नातिमानिता ।

भवन्ति संपदं दैवीमभिजातस्य भारत ॥ ३ ॥

śrī bhagavān uvāca
abhayaṁ sattva-saṁśuddhir
jñāna-yoga-vyavasthitiḥ
dānaṁ damaś ca yajñaś ca
svādhyāyas tapa ārjavam

ahimsā satyam akrodhas
tyāgaḥ śāntir apaiśunam
dayā bhūteṣv aloluptvaṁ
mārdavaṁ hrīr acāpalam

āśrama, or *gṛhastha-āśrama* or *vānaprastha-āśrama*. One must live very simply.

Ahiṃsā means not arresting the progressive life of any living entity. One should not think that since the spirit spark is never killed even after the killing of the body there is no harm in killing animals for sense gratification. People are now addicted to eating animals, in spite of having an ample supply of grains, fruits and milk. There is no necessity for animal killing. This injunction is for everyone. When there is no other alternative, one may kill an animal, but it should be offered in sacrifice. At any rate, when there is an ample food supply for humanity, persons who are desiring to make advancement in spiritual realization should not commit violence to animals. Real *ahiṃsā* means not checking anyone's progressive life. The animals are also making progress in their evolutionary life by transmigrating from one category of animal life to another. If a particular animal is killed, then his progress is checked. If an animal is staying in a particular body for so many days or so many years and is untimely killed, then he has to come back again in that form of life to complete the remaining days in order to be promoted to another species of life. So their progress should not be checked simply to satisfy one's palate. This is called *ahiṃsā*.

Satyam. This word means that one should not distort the truth for some personal interest. In Vedic literature there are some difficult passages, but the meaning or the purpose should be learned from a bona fide spiritual master. That is the process for understanding *Vedas*. *Śruti* means that one should hear from the authority. One should not construe some interpretation for his personal interest. There are so many commentaries on *Bhagavad-gītā* that misinterpret the original text. The real import of the word should be presented, and that should be learned from a bona fide spiritual master.

Akrodhaḥ means to check anger. Even if there is provocation one should be tolerant, for once one becomes angry his whole body becomes polluted. Anger is the product of the modes of passion and lust, so one who is transcendently situated should check himself from anger. *Apaiśunam*